

Edward Philip George SEAGA
(Phonetic: seeAHga)

JAMAICA

Prime Minister; Minister of Finance and Planning; Minister of Mining and Natural Resources (since November 1980)

Addressed as:
Mr. Prime Minister



Edward Seaga, leader of the centrist Jamaica Labor Party (JLP), inherited an economy plagued by eight years of decline. Seaga has publicly stated that private investment is essential to Jamaican economic recovery, and he has worked toward attracting that investment from both local and foreign sources. In a February 1982 speech he said that the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) proposed by President Ronald Reagan has the potential to be enormously beneficial to Jamaica--it will provide aid to the public sector as well as stimulate production in the private sector by promoting trade and private investment. He says that Jamaican businesses must also play a part in making the CBI effective by preparing to take advantage of an increased market for their products.

In 1959 the Governor of Jamaica appointed Seaga to the upper house of the legislature--at 29, he was the youngest member in history to have that honor. He was also the youngest of the architects of the 1962 Constitution, which proclaimed Jamaican independence. During 1962-67 he served as Minister of Development and Welfare, and during 1967-72 he was Minister of Finance. He has represented a poverty-stricken black district in western Kingston in Parliament since 1962 and has been JLP leader since 1974.

Of Lebanese descent, Seaga was born in Boston and holds a B.A. degree in social sciences from Harvard University (1952). He did postgraduate work in sociology and anthropology at the Jamaican campus of the University of the West Indies, where he specialized in child development and Jamaican revival cults. He has owned a financial consulting firm since 1972. Seaga, 51, enjoys folk music, folklore, and sports. Married to the former Mitsy Constantine, a onetime Miss Jamaica, he has three children.

CR M 82-11129
12 March 1982